



Laudato Si' Week

May 16-24, 2020
Celebrating the 5th
Anniversary

“I Urgently appeal, then,
for a new dialogue about
how we are shaping the
future of our planet.”

(Laudato Si' 14)

Opening Prayer *(to be said from May 16-23)*

A Prayer for Our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the Poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Amen.

*- Pope Francis published this prayer in his Laudato Si' encyclical.
It is meant for sharing with all who believe in a God who is the all-powerful Creator.*



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May 16: Climate as a Common Good (Ch 1)

The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. (23)

Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and eco-systemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited. (25)

Reflection:

1. What are ways I have found to simplify my lifestyle so that I can reflect my solidarity with the poorer peoples of the world?
2. Have I seen in the news notices of the way peoples in every part of the globe are becoming more anxious about climate change? What have I learned?
3. How can I share this information with others?



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May 17: Loss of Biodiversity (Ch 1)

The earth's resources are being plundered because of shortsighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production. The loss of forests and woodlands entails the loss of species which may constitute extremely important resources ... for food, ... for curing diseases, ... for regulating [beneficial climate conditions]. The great majority [of these resources] become extinct [or catastrophically damaged] for reasons related to human activity. [The climate crisis itself] is exposing threats to the functioning of ecosystems. ... A sober look at our world shows that the degree of human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey. (32-34)

Reflection:

1. "Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us." (33)
How can my prayer for the earth be enhanced with sensitivity and compassion for threatened species?
2. Biodiversity emphasizes the reality of diversity within and among species in a particular area and underlines the interconnectedness of these and their importance to the region as a whole.
Have I noticed the reduction of diversity within nature and social communities within my state and city?
3. What is one action I can do today to support our farmers, fishermen and social workers who are harvesting and promoting the wellness of different forms of life in their work?



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May 18: Breakdown of Society

(Ch 1)

The social dimensions of global change include the effects of technological innovations on employment, social exclusion, an inequitable distribution and consumption of energy and other services, social breakdown, increased violence and a rise in new forms of social aggression, drug trafficking, growing drug use by young people, and the loss of identity. These are signs that the growth of the past two centuries has not always led to an integral development and an improvement in the quality of life. Some of these signs are also symptomatic of real social decline, the silent rupture of the bonds of integration and social cohesion. (46)

Reflection:

Technology is a valuable tool.

1. When have I seen individuals, groups and companies perform services or provide assistance that reduces the unequal distribution of food, water, clean air, health care and educational opportunities?
2. When has technology led me to an unhealthy consumption of it?
3. How can I combat, one day at a time, the environmental problem of a “throwaway culture”?



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May 19: One Single Human Family (Ch 1)

The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet. Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest. (48)

...As the United States bishops have said, greater attention must be given to the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable, in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests. We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference. (52)

Reflection:

Justice and mercy are the roots of true hope, to *the dear neighbor* experiencing poverty.

1. What have I done to extend mercy and justice in my community?
2. What have I done to use less energy from fossil fuels and to limit my consumption of non-renewable energy?
3. How do I become more knowledgeable and responsive to what's happening to my vulnerable brothers and sisters in my own country and around the world suffering from the impact of climate crisis, COVID 19 pandemic, and economic turmoil?



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May 20: The Common Destination of Goods

(Ch 1)

The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone. If we make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good. If we do not, we burden our consciences with the weight of having denied the existence of others. That is why the New Zealand bishops asked what the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” means when “twenty percent of the world’s population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive. (95)

Reflection:

1. Do I see the earth as belonging to all people? The sunrise and sunset is a good example.
2. Do I frequently inform my legislators about issues affecting our environment and economy through petitions, emails and phone calls?
3. Today, when can I pause and see how each person on this “Common Home” is a unique gift from God?



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May 21: Cultural Ecology (Ch 4)

...It is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best. Nevertheless, in various parts of the world, pressure is being put on them to abandon their homelands to make room for agricultural or mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture. (146)

Reflection:

1. Refugees and migrants must leave their cultural homeland due to different and often horrendous circumstances. They come with hope for a chance to a new future for their families. Do I know my family of origin and why they left their homeland?
2. How can I be compassionate, supportive, and encouraging to refugees and migrants in practical ways?
3. How can I integrate or participate in other culture's rich celebrations?



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May 22: Ecological Conversion (Ch 5)

The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast. For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So, what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. (217)

Reflection:

1. What are some examples in which my “encounter with Jesus Christ became evident in my relationship with the world around” me?
2. When have I recognized and felt my heart touched?
When have I seen evidence that I am part of a “throw away” culture?
3. How can I partner with my friends to celebrate our commitment to honor God’s creation?



Courtesy of Pixabay

May 23:

Turning anew
to the Gospel
of Creation.

(Ch 2)

Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas **creation** can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion. (par. 76) Every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who give it its place in the world. (par 77) If we acknowledge the value and the fragility of nature, and at the same time our God-given abilities, we can finally leave behind the modern myth of unlimited material progress. (par 78) God, who wishes to work with us and who counts on our cooperation, can also bring good out of the evil we have done. (par. 80)

Reflection:

1. How is my personal relation with God influenced by my emerging understanding of the climate crisis and the need for Earth to regenerate – as it is happening now due to sheltering in place?
2. How important is it that I as a Christian respond to Pope Francis' call to all people in the world to change thinking and patterns of behavior that are damaging our planet?
3. In what ways have I begun to see this world, this earth, as a "common home" where we all live together and are responsible for each other?



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Closing Prayer *(to be said from May 16 -23)*

A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation - by Pope Francis

Father, we praise you with all your creatures. They came forth from your all-powerful hand; they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love. Praise be to you! Son of God, Jesus, through you all things were made. You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, you became part of this earth, and you gazed upon this world with human eyes. Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory. Praise be to you! Holy Spirit, by your light you guide this world towards the Father's love and accompany creation as it groans in travail. You also dwell in our hearts and you inspire us to do what is good. Praise be to you! Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness 180 for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is. God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen.



May 24:
Global Prayer
12 p.m. Local Time

On the last day of Laudato Si' Week, we unite in prayer. Together, we will create a worldwide wave of prayerful support, as people in each time zone around the globe pray together. Imagine the power of a unified prayer for a more just and sustainable world.

Loving God,
Create of heaven and earth and all that is in them, You created us in your image and made us Stewards of all creation, of our common home.

You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land so that all might be nourished.

Open our minds and touch our hearts, so that we may attend to your gift of creation.

Help us to be conscious that our common home belongs not only to us, but to all future generations, and that it is our responsibility to preserve it.
May we help each person secure the food and resources that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times, Especially the poorest and those most at risk of Being left behind.

Transform our fear, anxiety and feelings of isolation into hope so that we may experience a true conversion of the heart.

Help us to show creative solidarity in addressing the consequences of this global pandemic, make us courageous to embrace the changes that are needed in search of the common good, now more than ever may we feel that we are all interconnected, in our efforts to lift up the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen